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Chair: Mr. Jürgenson ..... (Estonia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

1. **Mr. Lajčák** (Slovakia), President of the General Assembly, said that it was imperative to maintain and build momentum for the Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved. In view of the interlinked and universal nature of the Goals and targets, due attention must be given to all areas in order for progress to be made across the board. The high-level political forum on sustainable development, which would be convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in 2018 and under the auspices of the General Assembly in 2019, should serve to keep Member States on track and ensure that no region or group was left behind.

2. During the current session of the Second Committee, Member States should reinforce their commitments to implement the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. They should also scale up their efforts in the areas of climate change mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation.

3. Financing for the Sustainable Development Goals remained critically important; in that regard, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development continued to provide the necessary guidance on financing for development. The Committee ought to examine innovative ways of ensuring that the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development could actually be implemented.

4. During the current session of the General Assembly, he would be placing a special emphasis on youth education and inclusion. Young persons must be integrally involved in development. He would also take an active part in the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, which would be launched on World Water Day, 22 March 2018. The vast potential of the Committee's work to improve people's quality of life all over the world and promote the sustainability of the planet made it essential to agree on commitments during the current session, especially at a time when multilateralism was under threat.

5. The work of the Committee also came at a crucial time because it coincided with many new processes intended to reform the way the United Nations delivered on the development agenda, such as the alignment of the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council with the 2030 Agenda; the Secretary-General's reform initiatives; the implementation and follow-up of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations development system; and the Committee's continued discussions on the reform of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

6. The United Nations development system must become more strategic, accountable, efficient and results-oriented in order to better meet the development hopes of the world's people. Care would be needed to achieve coherent outcomes.

7. Noting the huge impact that technology and innovation were making on people's lives and prosperity, he welcomed the forthcoming joint meeting between the Committee and the Economic and Social Council to discuss access to the benefits of technological advances under the theme "The future of everything: sustainable development in the age of rapid technological change".

8. The Committee should continue to take the specific challenges facing countries into account in its work, in particular those faced by African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, countries in conflict or post-conflict situations and middle-income countries.

9. When deliberating on critical but often contentious development issues, such as poverty eradication, macroeconomic issues, global governance and South-South cooperation, it was important to remember that the goal was not merely the adoption of a text. Meaningful impact on policies and programmes was also needed to improve people's lives.

10. The Committee should conduct inclusive and transparent work that was concluded in a timely fashion. All delegations must engage constructively at the current critical juncture with a view to achieving consensual outcomes that could make a concrete difference in the lives of the people whom the United Nations served.

Agenda item 19: Sustainable development (A/72/75–E/2017/56, A/72/174, A/72/216, A/72/343, A/72/343/Corr.1 and A/72/353)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/72/228)

(b) **Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** (A/72/119, A/72/119/Add.1 and A/72/214)

(c) **Disaster risk reduction** (A/72/259)

(d) **Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind** (A/72/82, A/72/152, A/72/152/Corr.1)

(e) **Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa** (A/72/152 and A/72/152/Corr.1)

(f) **Convention on Biological Diversity** (A/72/152 and A/72/152/Corr.1)

(g) **Education for sustainable development** (A/72/130)

(h) **Harmony with Nature** (A/72/175)

(i) **Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all** (A/72/156 and A/72/160)

(j) **Combating sand and dust storms**

11. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the momentum for implementing the 2030 Agenda remained strong, with many Heads of State or Government taking leadership roles. Countries were increasingly integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans and, in line with the interconnected nature of the Goals, seeking to ensure policy coherence. Stakeholder participation was growing, with business, civil society and the scientific community deeply engaged. A paradigm shift was taking place: the focus was increasingly on leaving no one behind and finding collaborative solutions. The Secretary-General's holistic vision for sustainable development included helping countries build resilient societies, averting crises, sustaining peace and strengthening the linkages between peace and security, humanitarian relief and achievement of the Goals.

12. Those positive changes notwithstanding, the pace of progress was too slow for the Goals to be achieved by 2030; and progress had not always been equitable. The key message was that the current momentum must be increased and progress made more inclusive to accomplish the bold vision articulated in the 2030 Agenda.

13. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/72/75–E/2017/56), he said that the report addressed the need to maintain momentum and accelerate progress, highlighted that organizations within the United Nations system were shaping their priorities, strategic plans and programmes with reference to the integrated and holistic nature of the Goals, and provided an update on how they were integrating the 2030 Agenda into their programmes. The report also addressed the ways that the United Nations system was improving the sustainability of its own facilities and management operations.

14. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development" (A/72/228), he said that the report provided additional analysis of unfinished business in that context. It also addressed the work of the 2017 high-level political forum, the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, the strengthening of the science-policy interface, the preparations for the Global Sustainable Development Report to be published in 2019, and the regional dimension of sustainable development.

15. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" (A/72/214), he said that the report presented an in-depth analysis of the priorities of small island developing States and included an account of relevant activities of Member States, United Nations funds and programmes, specialized agencies and regional commissions, as well as national, regional and subregional organizations.

16. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on agricultural technology for sustainable development (A/72/216), he said that the report reviewed key challenges such as the increasing vulnerability of food systems to climate change and the need to adapt to changing farm demographics while increasing agricultural productivity and enhancing the resource base. The report analysed recent trends in areas including scientific, technological and biological

innovations, holistic agricultural development, urban food production, water-saving and irrigation technologies, post-harvest and food systems, and institutional support for innovations in information and communications technology. The report also outlined policy solutions that went beyond agricultural production to encompass climate change, food losses and waste, and rural-urban linkages. Other recommendations contained in the report included impactful localized research and development, enabling frameworks at the subnational, national and global levels and a redirection of investments.

17. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on harmony with nature (A/72/175), he said that the report drew on contributions to the seventh interactive dialogue on harmony with nature, held on 21 April 2017, and addressed Earth jurisprudence and the 2030 Agenda, trends in the implementation of Earth-centred law, and a range of related initiatives and achievements in law, policy, education and public engagement. The report also provided key recommendations for restoring humans' relationship with nature.

18. He then introduced the Secretary-General's reports on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (A/72/160) and on the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (A/72/156). The former report provided an overview of progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 7 and proposed ways of strengthening institutional support and intergovernmental and inter-agency coordination on energy issues, whereas the latter report highlighted activities by stakeholders to advance progress towards sustainable energy for all.

19. Lastly, introducing the report of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on its twenty-second session, held in Marrakech from 7 to 18 November 2016 (FCCC/CP/2016/10), he said that the report identified the main outcomes of the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement. During the Conference, Governments had pledged more than $81 million to the Adaptation Fund, decided to operationalize the Paris Committee on Capacity-building, agreed on an extended gender work programme and initiated efforts towards operationalizing the local communities' and indigenous people's platform.

20. **Mr. Glasser** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (A/72/259), said that over the past two decades 1.35 million lives and $2.5 trillion had been lost to disasters, which caused an average of 26 million people to fall into poverty annually. The average loss borne by less developed countries as a result of disasters equated to over 20 per cent of their average annual social expenditure. Those costs were increasing because of a failure to take disaster risk into consideration in investment planning and, more fundamentally, because of climate change.

21. Hydrometeorological events such as floods and storms were responsible for the vast majority of disasters, which had doubled in frequency over the last four decades. As the Secretary-General had pointed out on his recent visit to Dominica, climate-related disasters were not "natural" but symptomatic of human activity and, specifically, of climate change. During that visit the Secretary-General had also highlighted countries' enormous vulnerability and the urgent need for innovative financing instruments to boost their resilience. Delivering on the 2030 Agenda would only be possible if greenhouse gas emissions were cut as rapidly as possible, in line with the Paris Agreement, and if climate and disaster risk were reduced, in accordance with the global targets of the Sendai Framework.

22. The report highlighted the progress that had been made in developing technical and policy guidance for implementation and monitoring of the Sendai Framework. It also drew attention to areas that required immediate attention.

23. The open-ended inter-governmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction, which had concluded its work in November 2016, had developed indicators for monitoring progress against the seven targets of the Sendai Framework, which had also been endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission monitoring the disaster risk reduction targets under Sustainable Development Goals 1, 11 and 13. Shared indicators would support coherence in implementing and monitoring both the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai Framework, thereby reducing the reporting burden for Member States. In addition, a tool to systematically track progress and guide countries in their development of disaster risk reduction strategies, the Sendai Framework Monitor, was being developed; it would also provide data to facilitate risk-informed investment decisions.

24. The 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, hosted by Mexico in May, had brought a range of stakeholders together to showcase the latest technologies, forge initiatives and renew commitments. It had been emphasized that urgent action was needed to achieve global target (e) of the Sendai Framework to substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020, and to integrate disaster risk reduction into economic planning and investment decisions, especially for investments in infrastructure. The Global Platform had been informed by the outcomes of the regional platforms for disaster risk reduction held in various countries, which, like the Global Platform, had allowed Member States to share ideas and identify practical ways to implement the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement within the overarching context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Those outcomes had also provided substantive inputs for the 2017 high-level political forum and the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level.

25. With technical and capacity-building support from the United Nations, Member States were developing policies and legislation, establishing and updating disaster loss databases, conducting risk assessments and training staff to embed risk in development planning, with a view to achieving global target (e) of the Sendai Framework. The report highlighted the need to develop building and infrastructure standards that incorporated climate and disaster risk, in particular to guide future private and public sector investments in infrastructure. The United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience was currently being implemented as a direct response to calls by Member States in General Assembly resolution 71/243 for enhanced coherence and the more efficient and effective use of resources.

26. States were encouraged in the report to invest in the development of disaster loss databases and risk profiles that incorporated climate risk in order to accelerate progress towards target (e) of the Sendai Framework and to provide an evidence base for risk-informed investments. The report also recommended that the high-level political forum should take disaster risk reduction into account, including in the voluntary national reviews. Lastly, the report recognized the importance of partnerships and inclusive approaches for the implementation of the Sendai Framework. The report and the recommendations contained therein provided an important basis for the upcoming General Assembly resolution.

27. **Ms. Sultanoğlu** (Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States of the United Nations Development Programme), presenting the report of the Secretary-General entitled "International cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan" (A/72/343 and A/72/343/Corr.1), said that the report outlined progress made from 2014 to 2016 by the Government of Kazakhstan, United Nations agencies and the international community in addressing the social, economic and ecological challenges of rehabilitating and developing the Semipalatinsk region. Since the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, Kazakhstan had been working to improve the well-being of people in the region. The focus of government and international programmes in the region had shifted from humanitarian assistance to the sustainable development agenda, meaning that economic, social and environmental issues were being addressed in a more holistic manner. As a result of a State programme, the Semipalatinsk region had witnessed steady industrial and agricultural growth. A five-year area-based development programme operated by the Government of Kazakhstan in conjunction with United Nations partners had concluded in 2016. The programme, which had offered community-based solutions in areas such as maternal and child health, local economic development, energy efficiency and citizen participation, had become a model for other regions in Kazakhstan, owing to the self-governance mechanisms which it pioneered; it had also contributed to dramatic declines in infant and maternal mortality.

28. Despite the firm foundations for lasting recovery and sustainable development, the region's long-term sustainable development would require continuous effort by the Government and the international community. The report outlined several priorities for future action to help rehabilitate the areas affected by the nuclear testing, including the need to address rural poverty and income inequality between regions, improve the quality of education, guarantee full gender equality and strengthen health care and social protection systems.

29. **Ms. Barbut** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa), in a recorded message, said that the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, had resulted in some important outcomes not contained in the report

on implementation of General Assembly 71/229 on the Convention (A/72/151, section II), which had been prepared prior to the Conference.

30. Firstly, the Conference had adopted a new strategic framework to replace the existing 10-year strategy up to 2018. The new strategy was predicated on the understanding that desertification, land degradation and drought constituted global threats that contributed to the creation and exacerbation of economic, social and environmental problems. The strategy would be effective from 2018 to 2030, to coincide with the 2030 Agenda. Since desertification, land degradation and drought continued to seriously compromise sustainable development, particularly in affected States, the strategy was designed to minimalize, prevent and reverse desertification and land degradation, and to mitigate the effects of drought; its overarching goal was to achieve a world free of land degradation by 2030. It included a strategic goal on drought, a phenomenon which was predicted to increase in frequency and intensity, including in zones that were currently humid. The Conference had also adopted a decision on the promotion of drought policies, which should be based on three pillars: early warning systems, vulnerability and risk assessment, and drought risk mitigation measures.

31. Secondly, the Conference had reaffirmed the leadership role of the secretariat of the Convention with regard to achieving land degradation neutrality. It had also recognized that measures taken to achieve land degradation neutrality could have knock-on effects, thereby contributing to an acceleration of progress towards other Sustainable Development Goals, and could play a catalysing role in attracting financing for sustainable development and climate action. In that connection, the Conference had duly recognized the contribution that target 3 of Goal 15, on land degradation, could make to sustainable development in all areas. The secretariat had assisted parties in defining national targets for the achievement of land degradation neutrality; 113 countries to date had either defined targets or were in the process of doing so. The primary challenge to progress towards land degradation neutrality was finding funding for the projects that countries would put in place to meet their targets. However, the secretariat of the Convention had made significant progress in the area of innovative financing, having established, with the Mirova-Natixis Group, the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund — the first ever public-private fund dedicated to reversing land degradation, with an anticipated initial contribution of approximately $300 million.

32. Thirdly, the Conference had heeded the call made by the General Assembly regarding the linkages between desertification, land degradation and drought, and forced migration. In a decision entitled "The positive role that measures taken under the Convention can play to address desertification/land degradation and drought as one of the drivers that causes migration", the Conference had requested the secretariat to support regional and international initiatives to promote sustainable land management with a view to reducing forced migration.

33. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/229 on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, (A/72/152, section II), she said that the report contained, inter alia: an overview of developments since the last report, submitted the previous year; an update on the preparations for the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, and the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda; a description of the global celebration of World Day to Combat Desertification, which had taken place in Ouagadougou on 15 June, and the outreach activities that had taken place at the event; an update on the secretariat's collaboration with the Global Environment Facility and the work of the science-policy interface mechanism; and observations and recommendations, which included a warning that the overarching Sustainable Development Goals would not be achieved if land degradation was not halted and reversed.

34. **Ms. Palmer** (Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity), speaking in a recorded message to introduce her report on the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/72/152, section III), said that the report covered the outcomes of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Cancun, Mexico, in December 2016. Those included the adoption of the Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Well-being, which focused on integrating biodiversity into key economic sectors in order to achieve global biodiversity targets. During the high-level segment of the Conference several parties had announced new commitments that would advance achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and 20 mega-diverse countries had adopted a charter to achieve Aichi Target 11 by 2020.

35. At the thirteenth meeting of the Conference 33 decisions had been adopted, most importantly a decision on mainstreaming biodiversity in such sectors

as agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism. A number of side events had also been held with a view to engaging a range of stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention; among them was the 2016 forum on business and biodiversity, which had resulted in more than 103 major businesses signing a new business and biodiversity pledge.

36. Despite significant progress, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets would not be achieved by 2020 at the current pace. The Conference had therefore urged parties to intensify efforts to achieve their national targets, and also to consider increasing the scope of national or regional targets.

37. The Convention secretariat had launched a report on the ways in which the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets contributed to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The secretariat had participated actively in the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, and had facilitated a number of voluntary commitments which would contribute significantly to advancing Goal 14.

38. **Ms. de Caen** (Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Regional for Arab States of the United Nations Development Programme) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/72/353), which provided an update on the progress made to implement successive resolutions adopted by the General Assembly concerning the environmental disaster caused by the destruction by the Israeli Air Force on 15 July 2006 of oil storage tanks near the Jiyeh electric power plant in Lebanon. She said that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had provided documents with a view to reassessing the damage from the oil spill to the Syrian coastline. However, a review by the United Nations Environment Programme had concluded that those documents did not offer new findings or scientifically significant data that differed so substantially from the data used in the original study that a change in the assessment would be warranted. In June 2016, the European Union, through its grant to the Government of Lebanon signed in 2015 for the protection and sustainable development of maritime resources in Lebanon, had awarded a contract for the treatment and disposal of the remaining solid waste from the 2006 oil spill. She noted that the Government of Israel had not assumed responsibility for the compensation requested, and that the Secretary-General had again invited the international donor community to contribute to the Eastern Mediterranean Oil Spill Restoration Trust Fund, which had received no contributions to date.

39. **Mr. Rahman** (Deputy Special Representative of the World Tourism Organization Liaison Office to the United Nations), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Central America (A/72/174), said that the World Tourism Organization had sought to capture the developments in Central America that advanced those Sustainable Development Goals directly related to sustainable tourism, namely Goal 8, on sustainable economic growth and full and decent employment, Goal 12, on sustainable production and consumption, and Goal 14, on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans. The report had been prepared in cooperation with countries in the region.

40. Most Central American countries had established new national policies, tourism plans, strategies, guidelines and/or programmes for the development of sustainable tourism, which took the Goals into account, and many countries in the region had also modified existing legislative or policy frameworks to support the development of sustainable tourism. In view of the rising number of natural disasters in Central America, it was noteworthy that five countries had prepared national emergency response plans.

41. Intraregional tourism was growing apace; as a result, the Governments in the region had taken steps to harmonize tourism development policies and quality standards; they were also increasingly recognizing the importance of data quality for the formulation of effective tourism policies and strategies that would maximize tourism's role in national and regional growth and development. In that connection, in 2016, the World Tourism Organization had supported the tourism branch of the Central American Integration System in the organization of a regional workshop on tourism statistics, held in Honduras. A series of six further workshops would be held in order to strengthen national statistical capacity with a view to developing Tourism Satellite Accounts.

42. International tourist arrivals for the Central American region were predicted to increase to 22 million by 2030, a figure which underscored the region's potential for continued economic development through tourism, as well as the growing significance of tourism as an instrument for social and economic inclusion. Against that backdrop, the Committee was urged to consider seriously the analyses, and particularly the recommendations, contained in the report.

43. **Ms. Gray** (Representative of the New York Office of the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO) introduced the report of the Director General of UNESCO on the implementation of education for sustainable development (A/72/130), which provided a general overview of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education and a review of the implementation of education for sustainable development in the framework of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development. The report concluded with considerations on the future of education for sustainable development and included some specific recommendations for the way forward. Overall the report clearly showed that education, especially education for sustainable development, was crucial for the implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, she drew attention to the recent UNESCO publication, entitled "Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives", which was a useful policy guide for educators and policymakers on the integration of the Goals into the curriculum.

44. **Mr. Carey** (Officer-in-Charge of the Office of Central Support Services), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the action plan for integrating sustainable development practices into Secretariat-wide operations and facilities management (A/72/82), said that the goal of the action plan was to create a Secretariat which, through its operations or facilities management, did not have a negative impact on the climate, as soon as possible, or by 2020, if practicable. The action plan would allow the Secretariat to contribute actively to different Sustainable Development Goals, including taking urgent action to combat climate change and ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. The report envisaged an overarching coordination mechanism for environmental management systems across the Secretariat. A central steering group had been established at the Secretariat and had already met in July 2017. Eventually, a network of steering groups would be established to coordinate the implementation of environmental management systems at duty stations around the world. The action plan would move the Organization from an ad hoc approach to sustainability towards an integrated and target-oriented process that struck a balance between harmonization and decentralization.

45. The renovation of United Nations Headquarters under the capital master plan had reduced energy consumption by two thirds from 2007 through 2016. The Department of Field Support had recently established an environmental strategy that included an environmental management system. A centralized policy and governance regime would maximize the impact of such efforts. The Secretariat's proposals had been guided by inputs from the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the Environment Management Group. With a relatively small amount of additional dedicated capacity, United Nations system resources could be better leveraged towards the 2020 target, and make the Secretariat a model for environmental sustainability.

46. **The Chair** drew attention to the report of the Joint inspection Unit on the final findings of the comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States (A/72/119), and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board on that report (A/72/119/Add.1).

47. **Mr. Momeni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2017 showed that progress had fallen short of expectations. He wondered what specific assistance could be provided to help meet the targets within the timelines set.

48. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the question could be answered with two words: "financing" and "investment". Unfortunately, neither had been forthcoming over the two previous years. Resources needed to be mobilized on the same scale as they had been for climate change.

49. **Mr. Glasser** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction) said that there was never enough money, and trade-offs were inevitable. One low-tech and low-cost measure that could have a major impact would be for the United Nations to make sure that countries fully understood their risk profiles, so that, for example, a country would not build an expensive new hospital in a location that was susceptible to climate-change-related disasters.

50. **Mr. Bukuru** (Chief, New York Liaison Office of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat) said that investing in the prevention of land degradation could serve as an accelerator for the Sustainable Development Goals. Maps of land degradation very closely tracked maps of poverty and hunger, which were the focus of Goals 1 and 2. Moreover, since the effects of land degradation were borne disproportionately by women, combating it would also contribute to Goal 5 on empowering

women. Identifying such accelerator investments could help to meet target deadlines.

51. **The Chair** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the item.

52. **Mr. Morejón Pazmiño** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that although the Group shared the generally positive tone of the report of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council at its 2017 session (E/HLPF/2017/6), it was concerned that poverty, hunger and malnutrition persisted, with trends in some regions shifting in the wrong direction. He reaffirmed the principles of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the implementation principles enunciated in paragraph 74 of the 2030 Agenda. Now that the New Urban Agenda and the global indicator framework had been adopted, efforts should be focused on implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Sendai Framework, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda. In that context, the Group wished to draw attention to the needs of developing countries — especially countries in special situations, African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States — and the specific challenges faced by middle-income countries, conflict and post-conflict countries, and countries and peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation.

53. Realizing sustainable development would require a revitalized global partnership that prioritized enhanced support to developing countries, including development financing, technology transfer on concessional and preferential terms, targeted capacity-building and technical assistance. Success would also depend on establishing a rules-based and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system. The Group was committed to engaging constructively with development partners through action-oriented draft resolutions based on the principle of global solidarity and focusing on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable.

54. Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the 2030 Agenda were of particular relevance to the agenda item under consideration. While the 2030 Agenda should be the primary focus, ongoing support should be provided to existing commitments. The Group reiterated the importance of supporting the sustainable development of small island developing States through the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway).

55. A more people-centred preventive approach to disaster risk should be pursued by promoting effective, inclusive, accessible, multi-hazard and multisectoral practices. The Sendai Framework stressed the vulnerability of the least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and African countries, as well as middle-income countries facing specific challenges, and the need for appropriate assistance to be extended to disaster-prone countries with specific characteristics, such as archipelagic countries and countries with extensive coastlines.

56. Climate change, desertification, land degradation, drought, dust and sand storms, and loss of biodiversity were interrelated and exerted multiplier effects on each other. The international community should address those challenges through existing mechanisms such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention of Biological Diversity. He urged the United Nations system to support implementation of the Ordos Declaration and the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework adopted at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification held in in Ordos, China, from 6 to 16 September 2017.

57. The Group called for inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels, including in early childhood and at the primary, secondary and tertiary stages, as well as technical and vocational training, so that everyone had access to lifelong learning opportunities that would enable them to contribute to sustainable development. Noting that many countries had accorded official recognition to the rights of nature, he welcomed the interactive dialogue on harmony with nature held by the General Assembly in commemoration of International Mother Earth Day on 21 April 2017 under the theme "Earth Jurisprudence".

58. **Mr. Locsin** (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management and the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response complemented the Sendai Framework. At the thirtieth ASEAN Summit, held in Manila, ASEAN leaders had reaffirmed the "ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region". Disaster management was one of the priority areas of the Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations. Under the Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management, the Association was working closely with the United Nations and other

partners through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management. The ASEAN Secretary-General and the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator had exchanged copies of an inter-operability brief at the third ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management, held on 18 August 2017 in Singapore. On 15 September 2017, the Association had held a high-level policy dialogue on risk assessment in Manila.

59. Southeast Asia was a biodiversity hotspot with more than its share of plant and animal species. ASEAN had reaffirmed its commitment to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in its joint statement to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, which facilitated coordination on the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources, had just established the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes Awards. The Association also planned to enhance implementation of its ASEAN Heritage Parks programme, including through the joint Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas Conservation programme with the European Union.

60. ASEAN was gravely concerned about the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable groups, which had been highlighted in the assessment reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The Association reaffirmed its commitment to the Paris Agreement and called for effective and timely implementation of all intended nationally determined contributions, and in particular support from developed countries for low-carbon and climate-resilient cities, sustainable energy technology and early warning systems in Southeast Asia. ASEAN looked forward to delivering a statement and hosting a side event at the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held from 6 to 17 November 2017 in Bonn, Germany.

61. **Mr. Marshall** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the recent hurricanes that had devastated several of the Community's member States were yet another reminder of the special vulnerabilities of small island developing States to the adverse effects of climate change. It had been estimated that natural disasters were causing losses of up to 2 per cent in annual gross domestic product (GDP). The upcoming Bonn climate change conference would provide an opportunity to take action for the sake of future generations. CARICOM also looked forward to the Secretary-General's climate summit planned for 2019.

62. He urged the Committee to take considered steps to ensure full and systematic support for implementation and follow-up of the Samoa Pathway, in which small island developing States were reaffirmed as a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities. The Community remained fully committed to the Sendai Framework. Given the rich biodiversity of their region, CARICOM members were also committed to the goals of conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components and fair and equitable sharing of its benefits, as enunciated in article 1 of the Convention on Biodiversity.

63. **Mr. Ahsan** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that as the deadline for the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 approached, GDP growth for the least developed countries remained well below the 7 per cent target. While the least developed countries continued to work to integrate the 2030 Agenda into their national policies and programmes, the international community must deliver on the resource package promised by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the United Nations system must further strengthen its normative and operational support. There should be synergy between follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and the Istanbul Programme of Action. He hoped to see evidence-based discussion of the special challenges faced by the least developed countries at the next meeting of the high-level political forum.

64. Members of vulnerable groups needed to be included in implementation processes for the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement. The Green Climate Fund should be fully operationalized with the goal of mobilizing $100 billion per year by 2020. Clean development mechanism projects were needed by the least developed countries, and the needs of people displaced by extreme weather events should be addressed. He stressed that climate change adaptation and mitigation funds should be additional to official development assistance (ODA) commitments, and allocated in a manner that was fair, equitable and proportionate to the impact of climate change.

65. The upcoming Bonn climate change conference and the Secretary-General's climate change summit planned for 2019 should highlight the particular challenges faced by least developed countries. Among

those challenges were land degradation and desertification, which were at the root of mass migrations, political instability and social breakdown, particularly in Africa. He welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on crisis mitigation and resilience-building for the least developed countries (A/72/270), which called for the creation of a comprehensive multi-stakeholder resilience-building mechanism for the least developed countries, leveraging existing measures and initiatives.

66. Despite some progress, access to affordable energy remained a challenge for the least developed countries, especially in rural areas. That situation was partly owing to an energy mix that was tilted towards fuel-powered plants, and might improve as renewable energy technologies became more competitive, affordable and accessible.

67. **Ms. Naeem** (Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that the agenda sub-items under consideration reflected the interlinked challenges that small island developing States confronted daily. The recent hurricanes in the Caribbean were a reminder of the threat that those challenges posed not only to development, but to survival itself. Economic growth would not be possible if limited resources were continually directed towards rebuilding and stop-gap measures. Global cooperation on implementing the Paris Agreement was not an option but an imperative. A greener, more sustainable path to development and improved resilience across all sectors were not abstract goals but necessities.

68. The livelihood and cultural heritage of AOSIS member States depended on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and seas. She therefore expressed appreciation to Fiji and Sweden for co-hosting the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, and urged follow-up of the final declaration of the Conference.

69. Progress on such shared goals depended on adequate means of implementation. There was a need to move beyond consideration only of per capita GDP when determining access to concessionary financing for small island developing States. Alternative criteria should be developed that took into account unique structural vulnerabilities. Natural disaster risks did not disappear upon graduation from least developed country status. The international community should move beyond reaction mode and take real steps to improve the fiscal space for small and vulnerable economies so that resilience could be built to external shocks and the effects of climate change.

70. The Alliance took a particular interest in sub-item 19 (b) on the Samoa Pathway. Alongside the high-level political forum, the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework was an important space for such partnership dialogues as the recent United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. In its comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States (A/72/119), the Joint Inspection Unit had found that, despite new agendas with new mandates, there had not been a corresponding increase in support to the Secretariat for their implementation. Its report had therefore recommended enhanced coordination between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, as well as continued mainstreaming of the Samoa Pathway. The Alliance was counting on the support of all Member States, and especially its development partners, during the Committee's consideration of that report's recommendations. Her delegation anticipated progress during the current session on preparations for the 2019 high-level midterm review of implementation of the Samoa Pathway called for by General Assembly resolution 71/225.

71. **Mr. Sisilo** (Solomon Islands), speaking on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States, said that as the escalating impacts of climate change continued to interact with the vulnerabilities of small island developing States, the conditions warranting their designation as "special cases" for sustainable development were more relevant than ever. It was critical to move forward on the Joint Inspection Unit's recommendations and preparations for the Samoa Pathway midterm review. Efforts towards sustainable development must help to build institutional capacity for nationally led programmes. The recent hurricanes had dramatically highlighted the importance of building the resilience of small island developing States to disaster shocks, in line with the Sendai Framework.

72. In its report (A/72/119), the Joint Inspection Unit had noted that access to sufficient and predictable financing was a perennial challenge for small island developing States. Given that traditional economic measurements did not take into account special vulnerabilities, a rethinking of the eligibility criteria for such financing was needed. The recent United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 had been a historic moment in advancing the health, productivity and resilience of oceans.

73. **Mr. Soriano Mena** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that CELAC member States were committed to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions in a balanced and integrated way, through joint solutions that took the specific challenges and needs of countries into consideration and left no one behind.

74. CELAC recognized the high-level political forum as key for the integrated follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda within the United Nations system. Rather than merely engaging in academic debate, the meetings of the forum held under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council would provide a dynamic platform for regular dialogue. They would also be closely coordinated to ensure coherence and would provide mutually reinforcing linkages and political guidance for the achievement of sustainable development.

75. The regional dimension was important in sustainable development; linkages between the high-level political forum, regional commissions and other relevant regional bodies should therefore be strengthened. The importance of participation by civil society and other stakeholders should be recognized, while taking into account national plans and policies.

76. Implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda would require the unequivocal commitment of the international community. Developed countries must honour their long-standing ODA commitments, including by establishing binding timelines for delivery of ODA, and for other forms of North-South cooperation. South-South cooperation had a particular role to play, notably in capacity-building supported by the exchange of knowledge and successful practices, as well as in other emerging forms of cooperation. An effective financing strategy would require the mobilization and effective use of new financial resources, both public and private, domestic and international.

77. In view of the region's vulnerability to climate change, CELAC emphasized the need to strengthen implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework and looked forward to the entry into force of the Sendai Framework Monitor.

78. CELAC member States would continue to promote regional measures to protect ecosystems, reduce deforestation and land degradation and, in particular, conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, notably through the mainstreaming of conservation and sustainability across relevant sectors. CELAC commended the recent progress on strengthening synergies between the various conventions related to biodiversity, and advocated the development of national biodiversity strategies to guarantee the success of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

79. CELAC rejected all unilateral economic, financial or trade measures, which were incompatible with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Such measures hindered development finance and impeded the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries. The CELAC countries continued to require support from the United Nations development system to implement the 2030 Agenda in accordance with their national priorities.

80. **Mr. Elisaia** (Samoa), speaking on behalf of the Pacific Islands Development Forum, said that the Samoa Pathway represented a sustainable development road map for small island developing States. The Committee had a critical role to play in the annual resolution on the Samoa Pathway, and the United Nations and the international community should assess progress and identify implementation gaps in the run-up to the Samoa Pathway midterm review. The high-level political forum could play a major role in facilitating implementation of the Samoa Pathway by providing a global platform to focus on issues of concern to small island developing States and identify challenges and structural barriers that required coordinated action at the global level.

81. The recent hurricanes had demonstrated the susceptibility of small island developing States to unpredictable setbacks. He looked forward to progress on building the resilience of those States to such shocks at the upcoming Bonn climate change conference, which would be held under the presidency of Fiji, a member of the Forum. The Forum was committed to implementing the voluntary commitments made at the recent United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

82. He urged United Nations entities to respond to calls to mainstream the 2030 Agenda in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development, and welcomed the work done by United Nations funds and programmes to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals into their strategic plans, noting that the Forum had a particular interest in mainstreaming the Samoa Pathway. Welcome steps had already been taken towards monitoring the progress of such mainstreaming.

83. At the Forum's forty-eighth meeting, held one month previously, leaders had endorsed the Regional Road Map for Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The 2014 Framework for Pacific Regionalism would be central to contextualizing global commitments under the 2030 Agenda and the Samoa Pathway. The Forum would continue to count on the support of the United Nations and other partners for both regional and national efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Capacity-building was needed across a wide range of areas, including data and statistics. Adequate and predictable funding would require simplified access to climate change finance. In that regard, he commended the pilot approval process adopted by the Green Climate Fund at its recent meeting in Cairo.

84. **Mr. Sinha** (India) said that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda had renewed the world's faith in multilateralism and collective action. In the spirit of sharing its experiences to accelerate the implementation of the Agenda, India had been among the 42 countries that had presented voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum in July.

85. The national development goals of India were mirrored in the Sustainable Development Goals, which would be achieved through a whole-of-government approach with unity of purpose and efforts at all levels. Responsibility for overseeing the Goals had been assigned to the National Institution for Transforming India, which was chaired by the Prime Minister of India.

86. Collective efforts and inclusive growth formed the cornerstone of the national development agenda. Short-term goals in that context would be addressed by the Government's draft action agenda covering the period 2017–2020, while longer-term policy objectives would be covered by a 15-year vision.

87. Effective tracking of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals required accessible, reliable, timely and disaggregated data at all levels. He therefore welcomed the adoption of the global indicator framework and expressed appreciation for the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. Draft indicators for tracking the Goals in India had already been developed and placed in the public domain for wider consultation.

88. In view of the unprecedented scale of global partnership that would be needed to achieve the Goals, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals for repositioning the United Nations development system, which included a funding compact to mobilize greater resources and correct the imbalance between core and non-core funding. For its part, India continued to expand its development partners in a spirit of South-South solidarity, including through the newly established India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund.

89. As climate change was a critical component of sustainable development, his delegation also welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative to renew the focus on climate action. The climate action plans of India reflected its strong commitment to substantially reduce greenhouse emissions, make greater use of non-fossil fuels and create additional carbon sinks. Among other initiatives, India was working with partner countries to establish the International Solar Alliance in order to facilitate the transition towards renewable energy globally.

90. India remained firmly committed to the Sendai Framework. In that context, it had hosted the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in New Delhi in November 2016 and the Prime Minister of India had released the National Disaster Management Plan in June 2017.

91. **Mr. Yaakob** (Malaysia) said that, as a middle-income country, Malaysia was vulnerable to being caught in the middle-income trap. In the era of the Sustainable Development Goals, the challenge was to redesign development strategies that focused on innovative, sustainable and inclusive growth while gradually shifting to higher value-added sectors. As science, technology and innovative played a crucial role in that regard, his delegation called on partners to enhance their development assistance to middle-income countries, especially the transfer of knowledge and technology.

92. Malaysia remained committed to helping other developing countries achieve the 2030 Agenda and was sharing development expertise through its national technical cooperation programme. To date, more than 32,000 participants from 143 developing countries had benefited from assistance under the programme.

93. Reaffirming his Government's commitment to implement the New Urban Agenda adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), he said that Malaysia looked forward to hosting the ninth session of the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur in February 2018. His country placed a high priority on developing more inclusive communities to strengthen the economy, create jobs, promote efficient energy,

protect the environment and contribute towards improved human health.

94. Malaysia had shared its development experience by presenting its voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in July 2017. Specific measures had been put in place to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Malaysia and significant progress had already been made. However, there was still an urgent need to operationalize sustainable development for the greater good and ensure that no one was left behind.

95. **Ms. Bajana Tinoco** (Nicaragua) said that the international community must work together to achieve the 2030 Agenda on the basis of shared but differentiated responsibilities. Nicaragua prioritized poverty eradication, which would support development in harmony with Mother Earth that would ensure peace and prosperity for future generations. However, without the requisite ambition and political will, the 2030 Agenda would flounder. Developed countries must honour their ODA commitments, as well as providing new, additional and predictable financing. In addition, all coercive economic measures applied by developed countries that hindered development must be repealed.

96. The recent record high temperatures across the world, and the low levels of ambition demonstrated with regard to cutting greenhouse gas emissions, were of grave concern. Developed countries should take the lead on addressing climate change by changing their unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and fulfilling their commitments related to financing and technology transfer.

97. The Committee had a vital role to play in sustainable development. Member States should act in good faith and in solidarity in order to ensure that the current session of the General Assembly resulted in the best possible outcomes.

98. **Mr. Xu** Zhongsheng (China) said that many developing countries lacked the financial and technological means to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. North-South cooperation should be the primary focus of development partnerships, with South-South and triangular cooperation playing a complementary role. Cooperative mechanisms should be developed for disaster risk reduction and mitigation based on shared experiences, with more technical and material assistance provided by developed countries. His country had provided RMB 50 million in assistance to Mexico after that country's recent earthquake, as well as $3.8 million to the Dominican Republic and $2.5 million to Antigua and Barbuda.

99. Calling for coordinated implementation of the Paris Agreement, he said that developed countries should do more to reduce emissions and facilitate capacity-building financing and technology transfer. His country supported "win-win" cooperation on a fair and reasonable global climate change governance system. Domestically, China had made great progress on green, low-carbon development.

100. He called on the international community to provide funds and technology transfer to help affected countries build their capacities to fight desertification. In September 2017, the Chinese city of Ordos had hosted the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. That Conference had adopted the Ordos Declaration, which envisioned a target of zero net land degradation by 2030. China would also be hosting the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in 2020.

101. China had adopted its country programme for the 2030 Agenda, as well as the relevant progress report. In 2017, it had hosted the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation and the ninth Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) summit, both of which had focused on implementation of the 2030 Agenda. China stood ready to cooperate with all countries to promote achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.